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NAGANANDA



AN ADAPTATION OF HARSHA'S FAMOUS
SANSKRIT PLAY.

CMV Publications

Besides being a patron of art and literature, King Harshavardhana of Kannauj, who reigned from about 606 A. D. to 647 A. D., was himself a dramatist of high repute. Although he may have been influenced by Kalidasa, Harsha was a dramatist with original ideas, imagination and techniques.

Nagananda is the dramatisation of a Buddhist legend that occurs in the Brihat Katha. It is the story of Jimutavahana, a Vidyadhara prince, who finds contentment in sacrificing his own life so that others might live. He invites death and likes it. "Even on my mother's lap, as a child, I had not experienced the joy that I am experiencing now on the seat of sacrifice"—Thus he faces death with a smile which ultimately brings about a transformation in Garuda, the mythical bird.

In "Nagananda", Harsha has tried to blend Buddhism and Hinduism. The ideal of sacrificing one's life, if need be, for the sake of another is essentially Buddhist. The parts played by Garuda and Goddess Gauri and the reference to Indra and the other Hindu gods give the story a Puranic touch.

I-tsing, the Chinese traveller, records that Harsha versified the story of Bodhisatva Jimutavahana and acted it on the stage.

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NAGANANDA



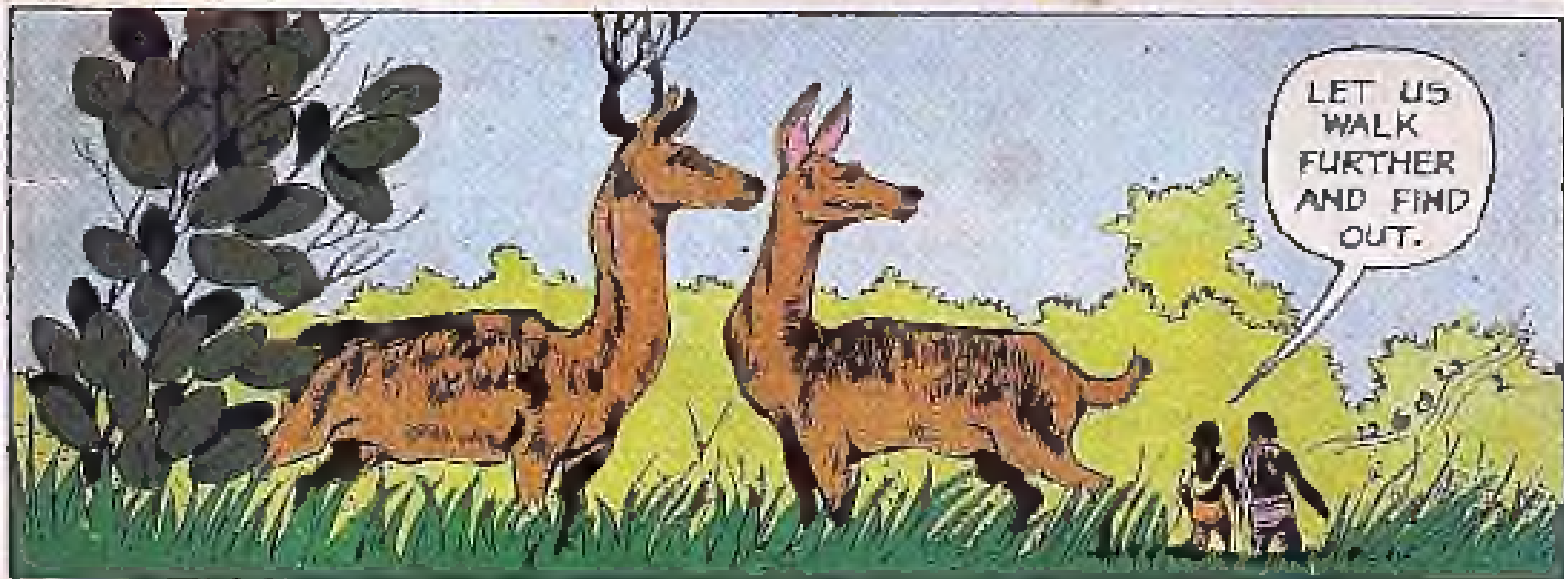
HAVING ENTRUSTED HIS KINGDOM TO HIS MINISTERS, JIMUTAVAHANA, THE VIDYADHARA PRINCE, HAD DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO THE SERVICE OF HIS AGED PARENTS. ALONG WITH HIS FRIEND ATREYA, HE WAS NOW AT THE MALAYA MOUNTAINS LOOKING FOR A SUITABLE HERMITAGE FOR THEM.

SUDDENLY, THE CLEAR NOTES OF A MELODIOUS SONG FLOATED THROUGH THE AIR.

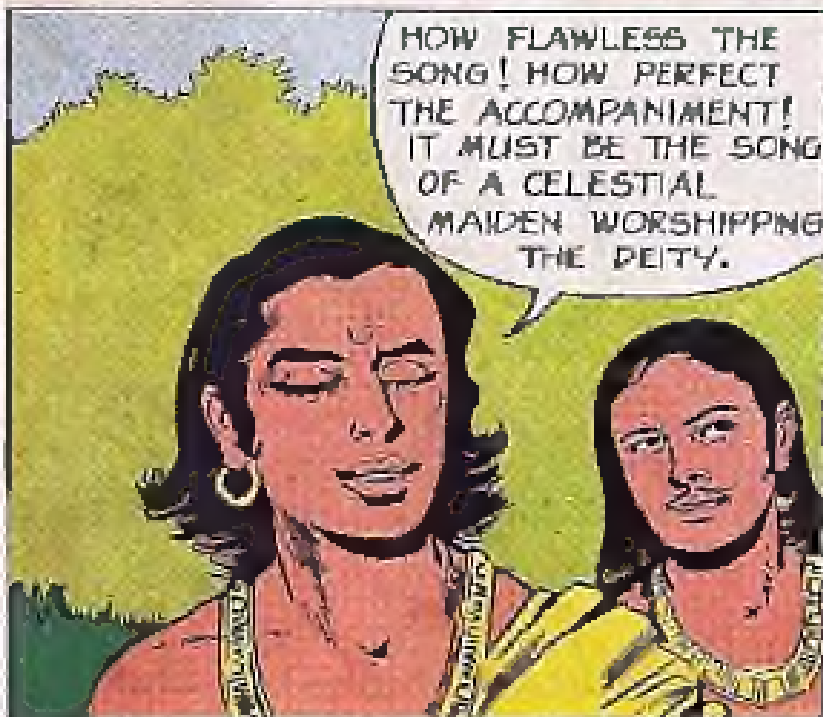
WHO COULD BE SINGING IN THIS LONELY GROVE?



LET US WALK FURTHER AND FIND OUT.



HOW FLAWLESS THE SONG! HOW PERFECT THE ACCOMPANIMENT! IT MUST BE THE SONG OF A CELESTIAL MAIDEN WORSHIPPING THE DEITY.



COME, FRIEND. THEN WE TOO SHALL WORSHIP THE DEITY!



AS THEY NEARED THE TEMPLE —



OH! IT IS INDEED
A MADEN! LET
US ENTER.

WAIT! SHE
MAY STOP
SINGING IF
SHE SEES US.
LET HER
FINISH THE
SONG.

AS SOON AS THE SONG WAS OVER —



O PRINCESS MALAYAVATI,
WHY DO YOU WASTE
YOUR TIME WORSHIPPING
THIS MERCILESS DEITY?
YOUR DEVOTION SEEMS
TO HAVE NO EFFECT
ON HER.

YOU ARE WRONG, CHATURIKA.
EARLY THIS MORNING SHE
APPEARED IN MY DREAM AND
FAVoured ME WITH A VARA.*
A VIDYADHARA PRINCE WOULD
SOON MARRY ME, SHE
PROMISED.

* BOON. ALSO MEANS HUSBAND.

JUST THEN,
THE TWO
FRIENDS
ENTERED
THE TEMPLE.

IS SHE A
GODDESS OR
A HUMAN
BEING?

CHATURIKA,
WHO COULD
THIS BE?

WHO ELSE BUT THE VARA!
WE MUST HONOUR OUR
GUESTS—OFFER THEM A
SEAT.



A FEW MINUTES LATER, AN
ASCETIC ENTERED THE TEMPLE.

JIMUTAVAHANA
SALUTES YOU,
REVERED SIR.

AH! BELOVED
JIMUTAVAHANA.



THE ASCETIC ACKNOWLEDGED
JIMUTAVAHANA'S GESTURE AND
TURNED TO MALAYAVATI.

SAGE KAUSHIKA* HAS
SENT FOR YOU. IT IS
TIME FOR THE
MIDDAY WORSHIP.

I SHALL LEAVE
IMMEDIATELY,
SIR!



MALAYAVATI AND CHATURIKA LEFT THE TEMPLE.

ARE YOU A NAGAKANYA* OR A PRINCESS OF THE SIDDHAS? WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU HAVE POSSESSED MY HEART.

MY BODY OBEYS THE COMMAND OF MY GURU BUT MY HEART LINGERS ON.

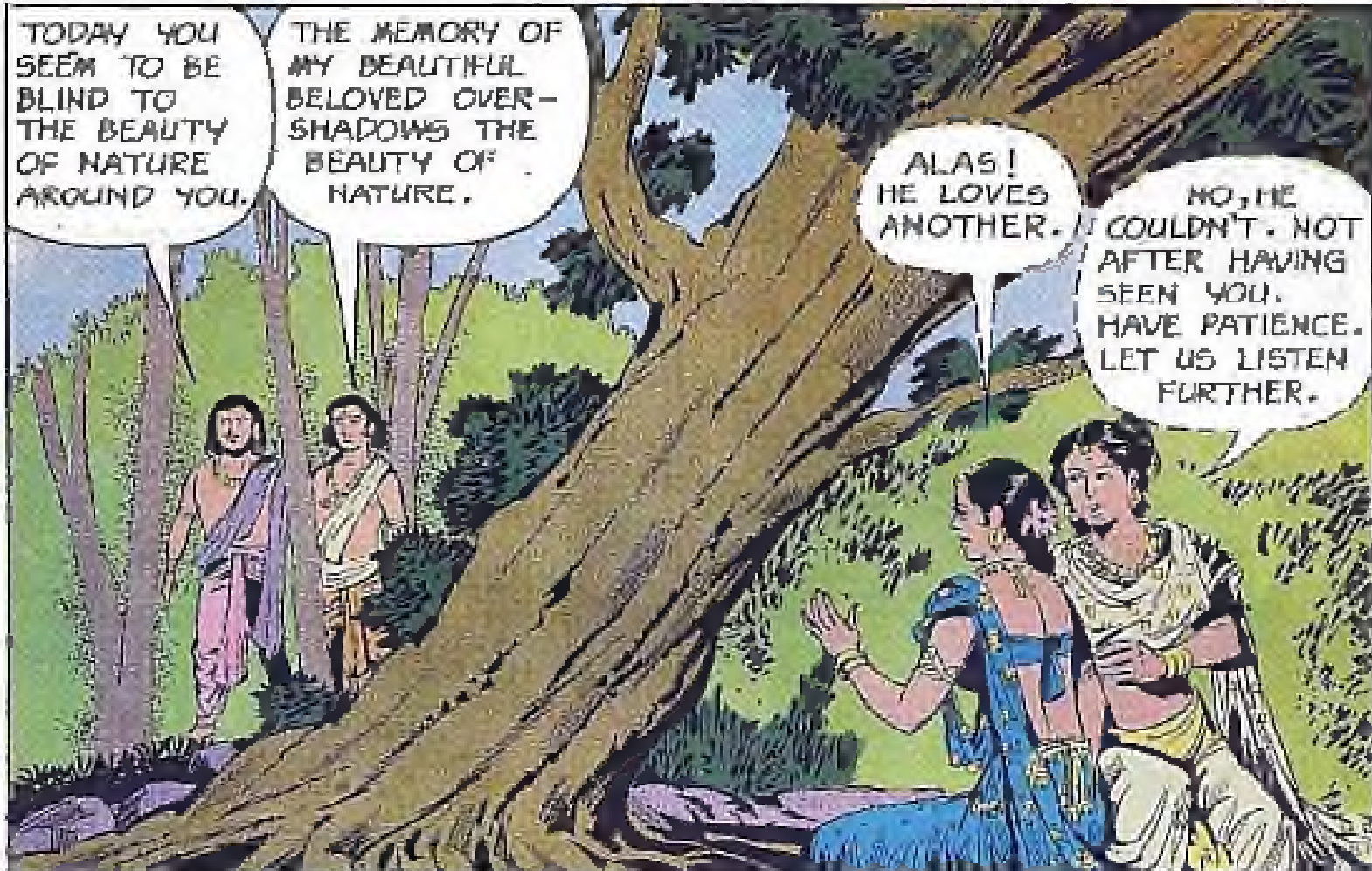
LOVE MAY FEED THE HEART. BUT THE BODY NEEDS OTHER NOURISHMENT. LET'S GO. THE HERMITS AWAIT US FOR THE NOONDAY MEAL.

I CANNOT BEAR THIS TORMENT ANY LONGER, CHATURIKA. CAN YOU THINK OF ANY REMEDY?

THERE IS ONLY ONE— AND HE IS HEADING THIS WAY.

I CAN'T FACE HIM. HE'LL GUESS MY SECRET. LET US RUN AWAY.

NO! WAIT! LET THEM PASS. WE'LL FOLLOW THEM AND OVERHEAR THEIR CONVERSATION.





IT'S MITRAVASU,
THE SIDDHA PRINCE!
QUICK! COVER THE
PORTRAIT.

MALAYAVATI,
IT'S YOUR
BROTHER. HE
MUST NOT
SEE US.



WELCOME, MITRA-
VASU. IS THE
KING, YOUR
FATHER, WELL?

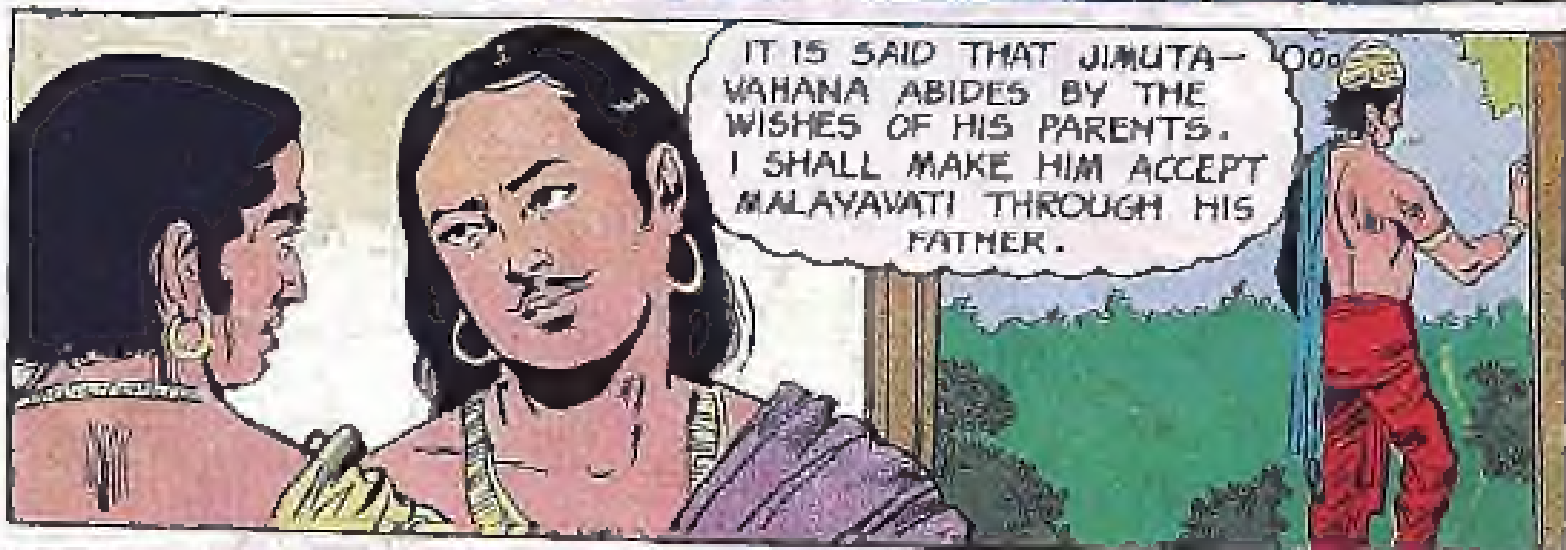
HE IS. I BRING
YOU A
PROPOSAL
FROM HIM.



HE WANTS
YOU TO
MARRY MY
SISTER, THE
PRINCESS
MALAYAVATI.

CHATURIKA LOOKED ANXIOUSLY AT
MALAYAVATI AS THEY WAITED FOR
JIMUTAVAHANA'S REACTION.





MAHARAJA, A GREAT WAY AWAY,
STOPPED.



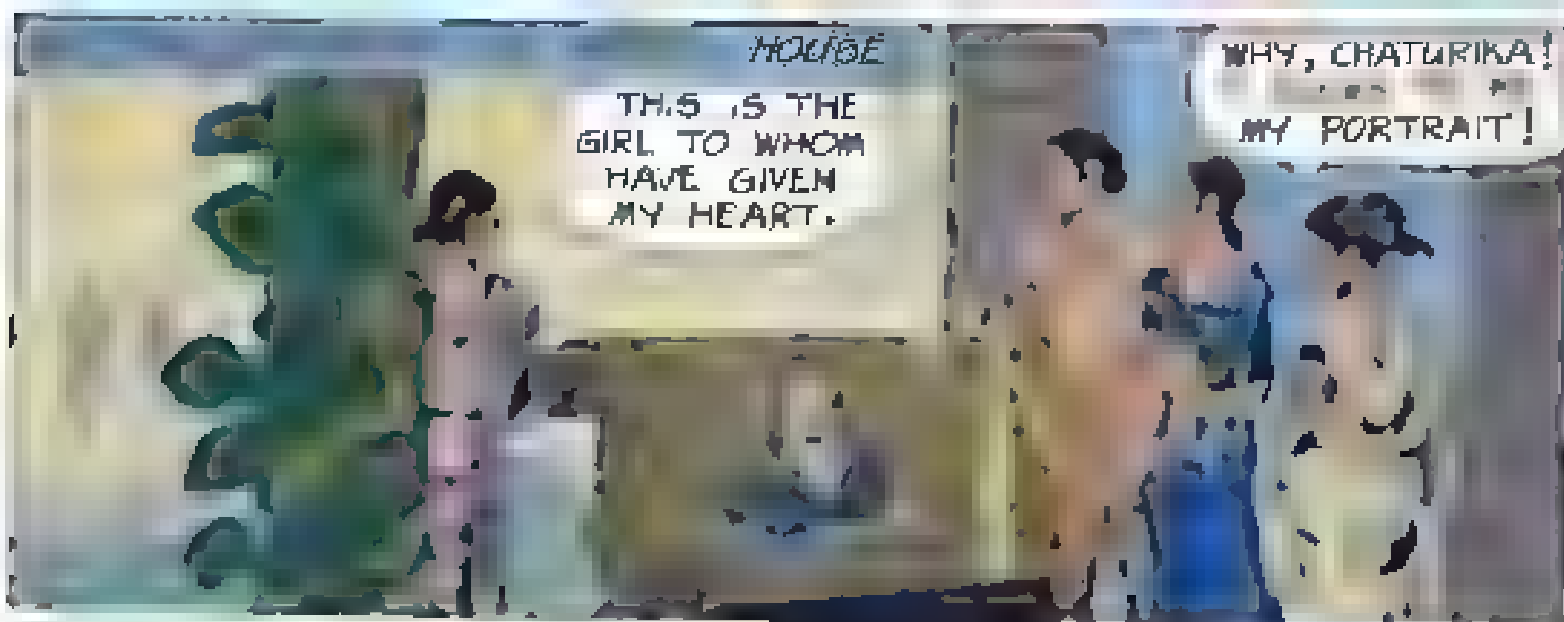
O GODDESS GOWRI,
YOUR WORDS HAVE
PROVED FALSE. LIFE
HAS NO MEANING
FOR ME NOW.



HELP!
HELP! THE
PRINCE! I
SAVE THE
PRINCE!















AT THE TIME,
GARUDA USED TO
ENTER PATALA?



AT THE RATE YOU
ARE KILLING THE
NAGAS, A DAY WILL
SOON COME WHEN
YOU WILL HAVE
TO STARVE.



NAGA A DAY
FOR YOU TO
DEVOUR. IT
WOULD BE
IN YOUR
OWN
INTEREST

AT THE RATE YOU
ARE KILLING THE
NAGAS, A DAY WILL
SOON COME WHEN
YOU WILL HAVE
TO STARVE.

WHAT YOU SEE
THAT ARE THE
CHAINS, BONES OF
GARUDA'S ILL-FATED
VICTIMS

AH! IF I COULD
RESCUE YOU
NAGA BY YOUR
OWN HAND!

JIMUTA,
IT'S GETTING
LATE LET
US GO

LET ME NOT
LEAVE YOU
ALONE
I WILL JOIN YOU
IN A WHILE.

ALAS! MY BELOVED
SON! HOW CAN
I GIVE YOU UP?



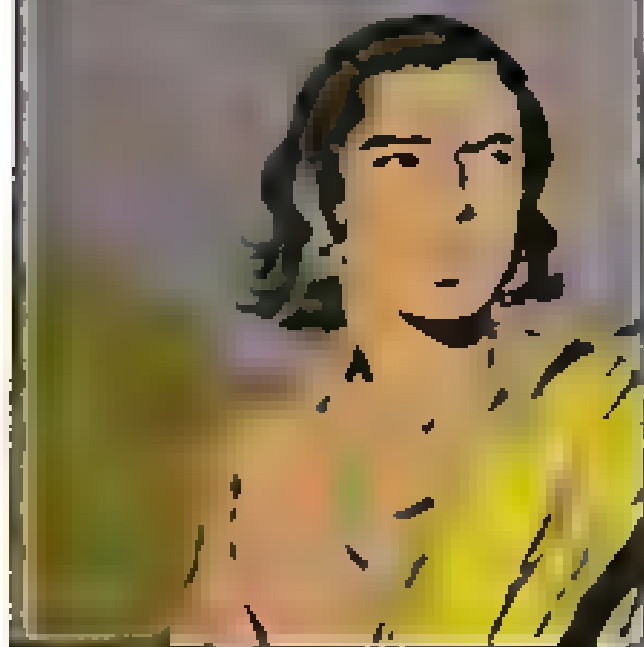


UNFORTUNATE
MOTHER, WILL
YOU MAKE YOUR
OWN MOTHER
WEEP? NO, SON.

I'LL COME
WITH YOU.

AS THE MOTHER AND

OF WHAT USE IS
MY LIFE IF IT CAN'T
SAVE ANOTHER. IF
ONLY I HAD THE
RED ROBE...



MAGANANDA

THE QUEEN OF THE SIDDHAS CAME
THERE WITH THE

HERE IS THE
CUSTOMARY RED
ROBE FOR THE
PRINCE YOUR
MOTHER-IN-LAW

IT HAS COME
AT THE RIGHT
TIME

MY RESPECTS
TO THE QUEEN.



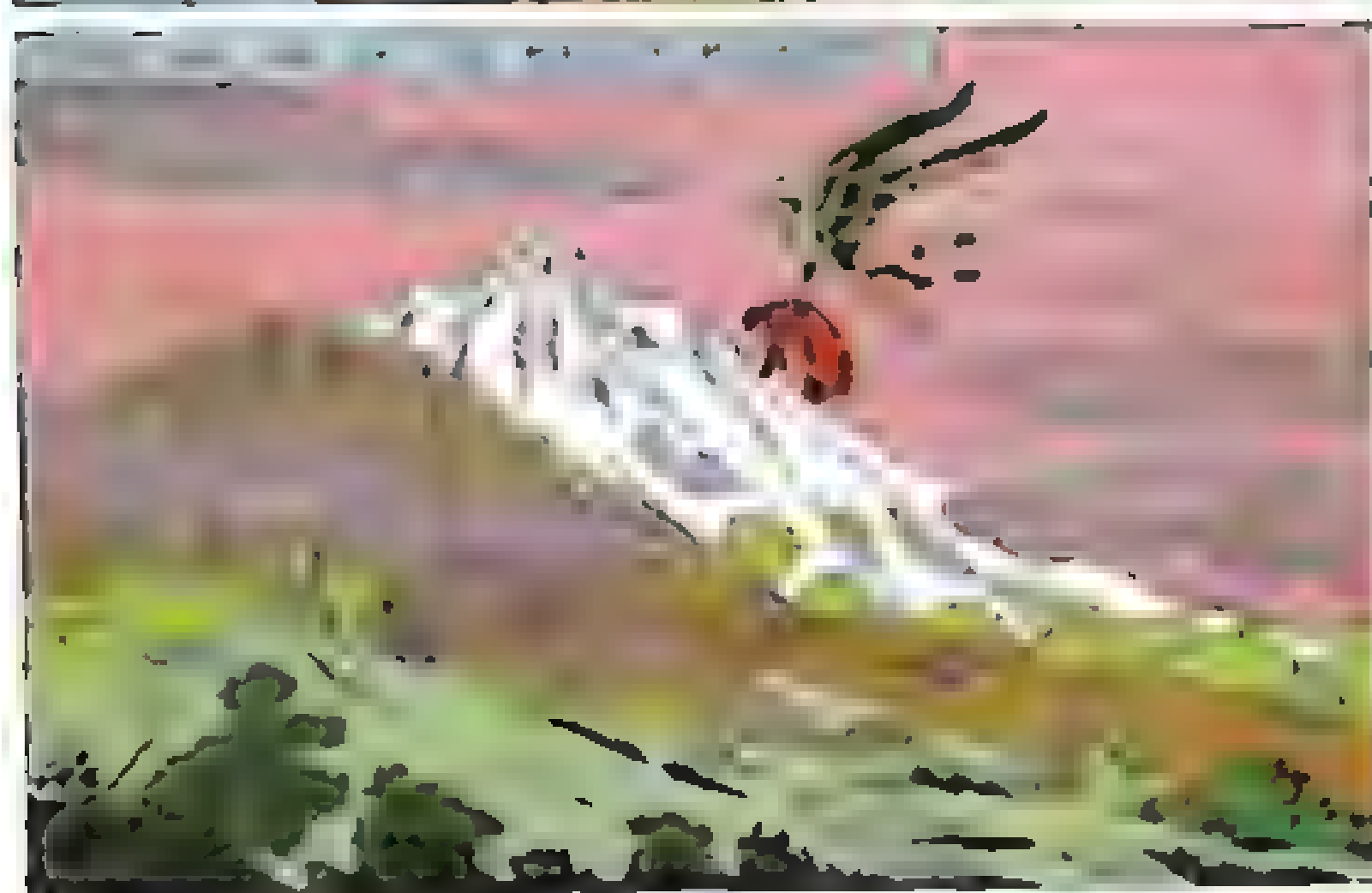
MY MARRIAGE TO
MALAYAVATI HAS
BORN FRUIT. IT IS
GOING TO HELP ME
AVE A LIFE



AS SOON AS JIMUTAVAHANA
CLAD IN THE RED ROBE
OCCUPIED THE SEAT OF



3. GARUDA SWOOPED
DOWN UPON HIS
PREY AND GRIPPING
HIM IN HIS CLAWS,
FLEW WITH HIM...



MEANWHILE, JIMUTAVAHANA'S PARENTS WERE ANXIOUS

WHY HASN'T HE RETURNED YET?

HE'S BEEN MISSING FOR A LONG TIME



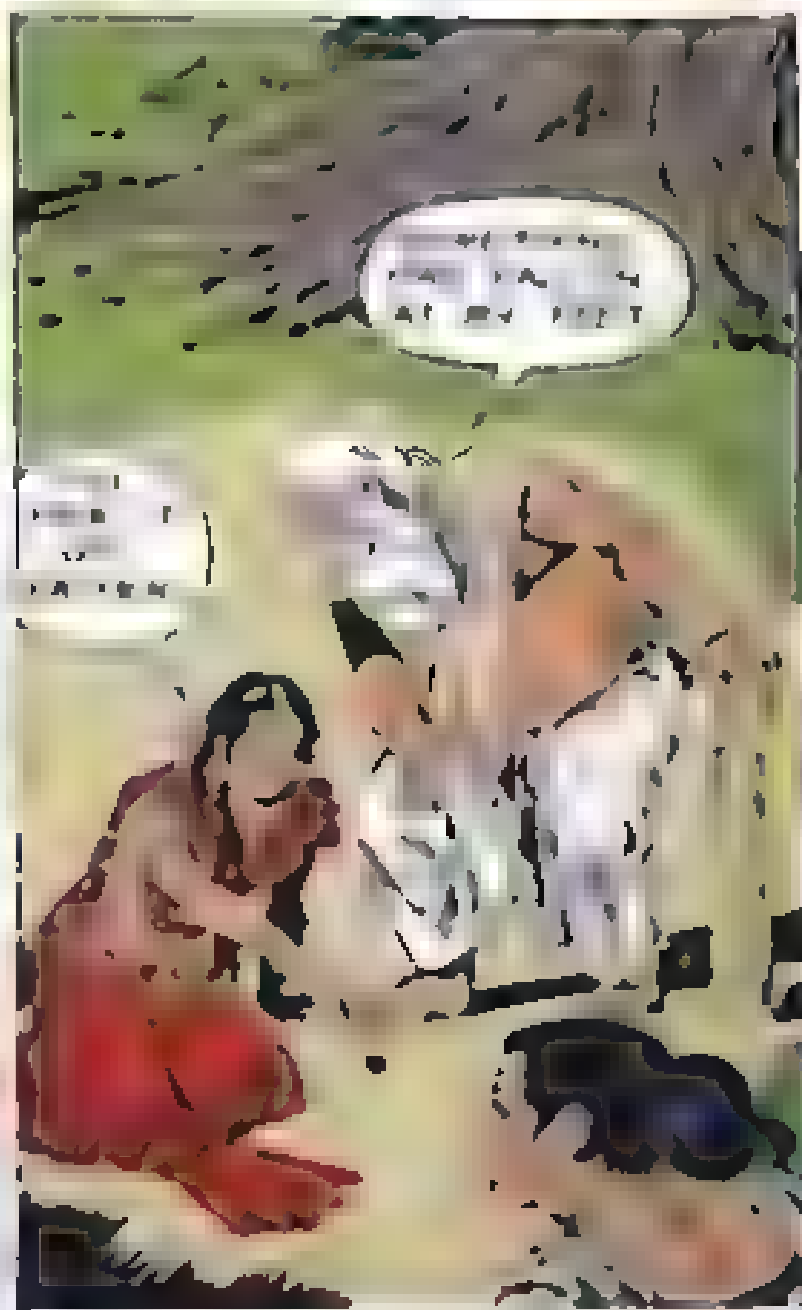
THEY WERE WORRIED

A LONG TIME AGO, A GROUP OF PEOPLE WERE TALKING ABOUT THE DANGER OF THE

LIFE IS IN DANGER!



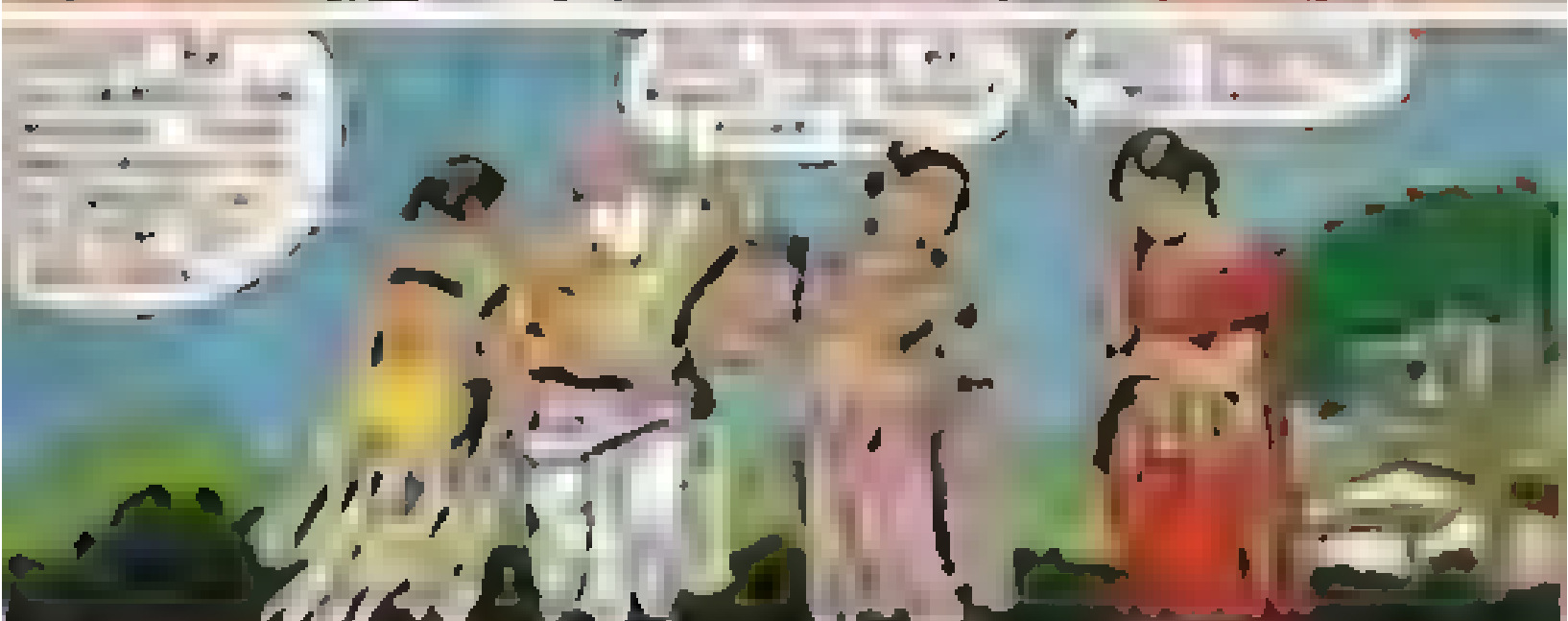
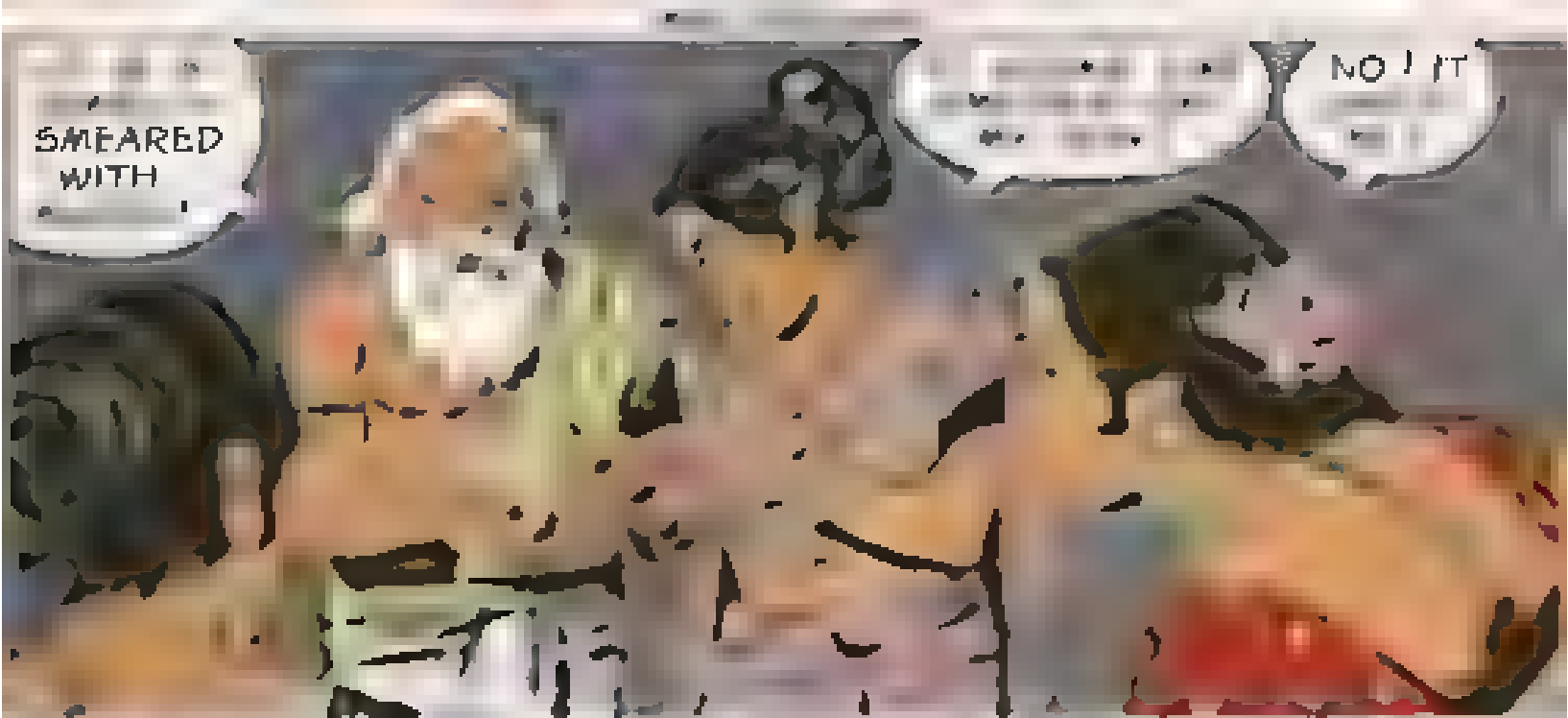
THEY WERE WORRIED



MAHATMA

THEY WERE WORRIED

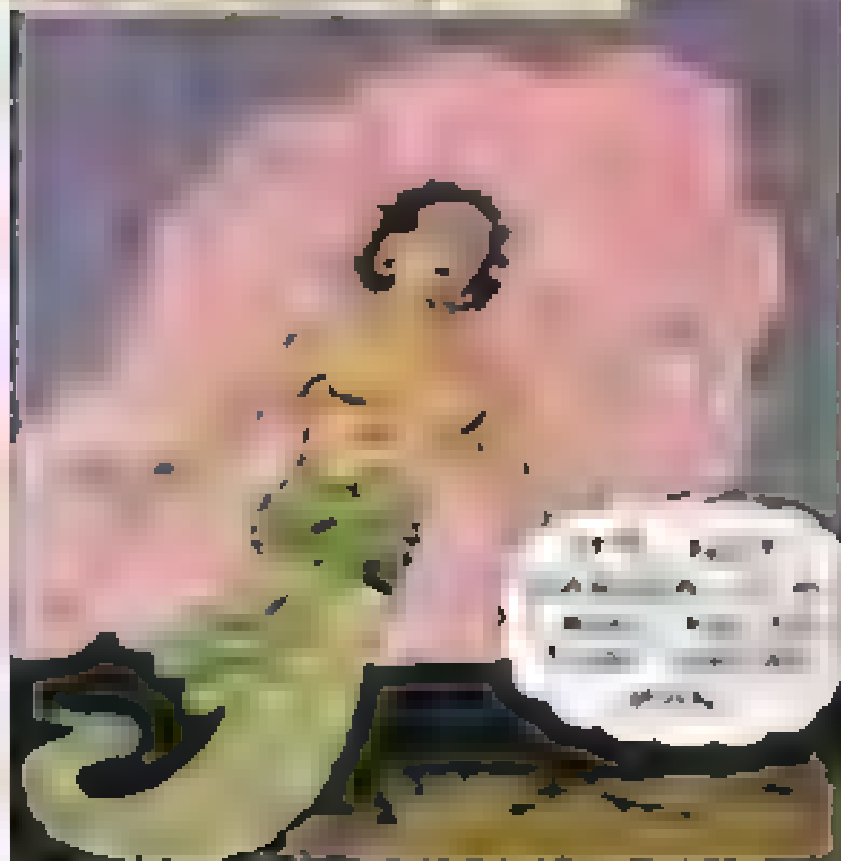






BLOOD! OH
GOD! GARUDA
MUST HAVE

FULL OF GUILT, HE GLIDED

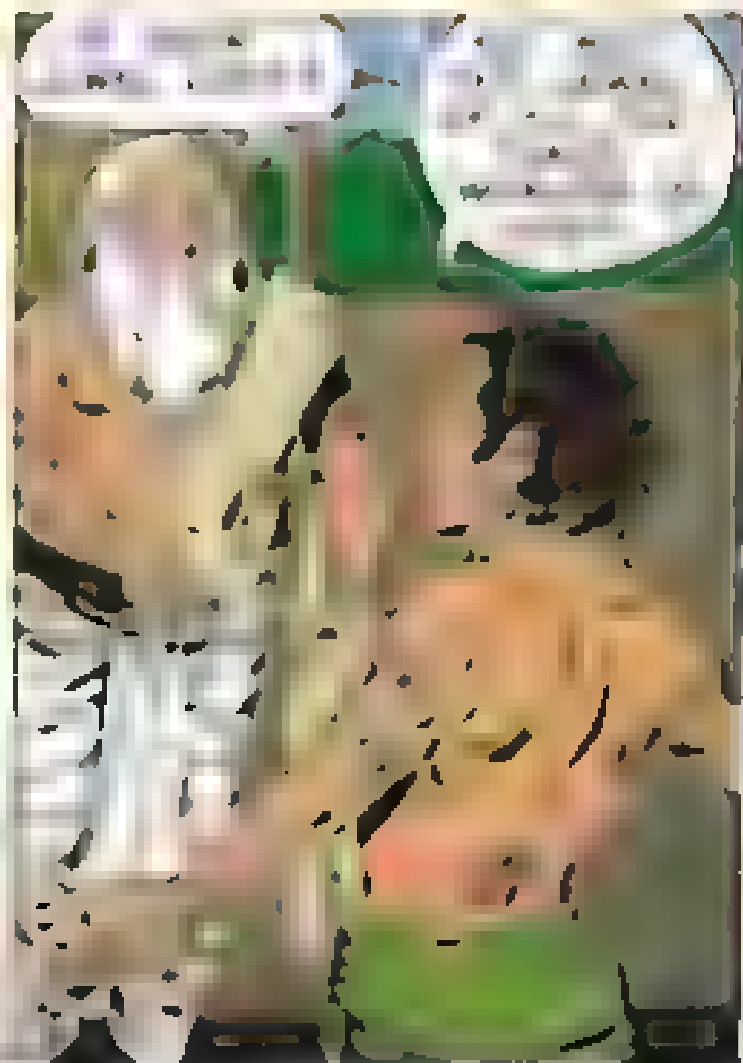


THE JEWEL
BELONGS
TO HIM.

CHILD, HERE COMES
A HAGA. PERHAPS
THE JEWEL
BELONGS
TO HIM.



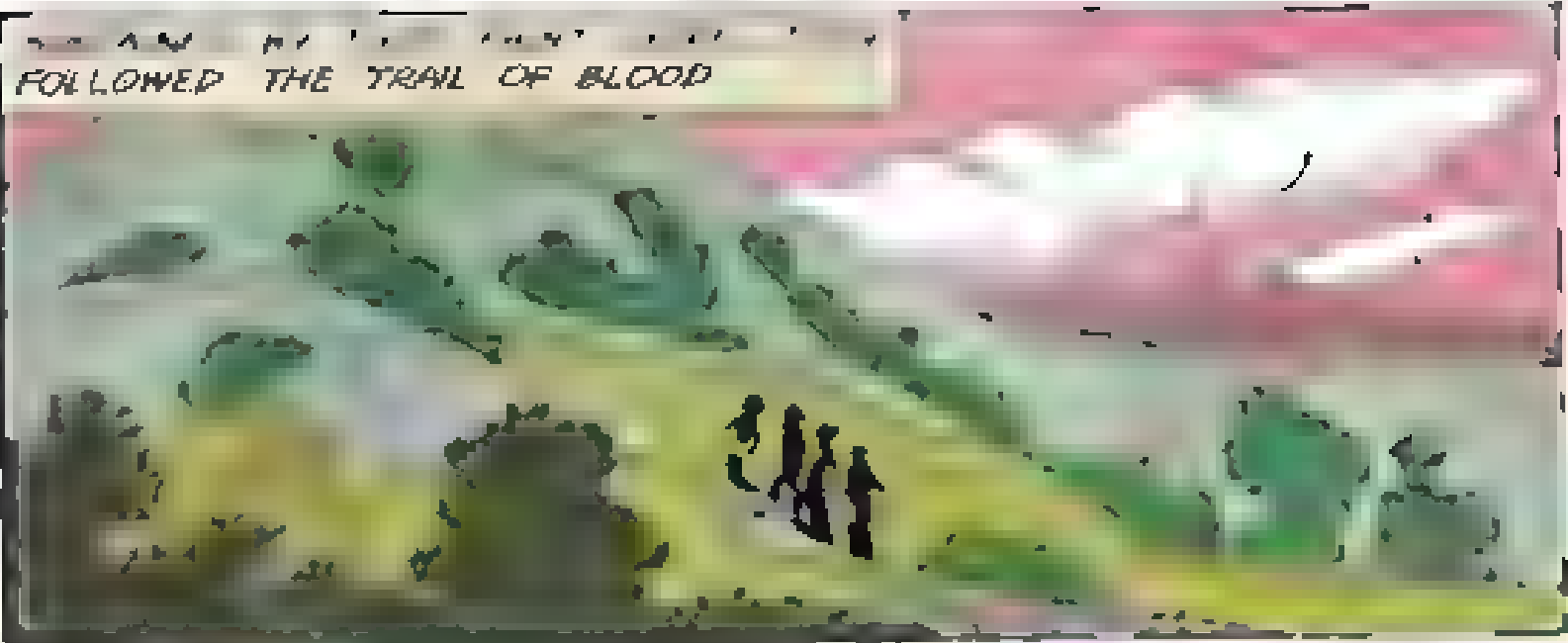
THE JEWEL
BELONGS
TO HIM.



THE JEWEL
BELONGS
TO HIM.



FOLLOWED THE TRAIL OF BLOOD



PECKING AT JIMUTAVAHANA.

PECKING ALL MY
GILTS AND BEST FINE
WITH MY THIS ONE
IS LAM AN
PECKING



YOU CAN NOT
GIVE ME A
NA A WHILE
FOR YOU



AT THAT MOMENT, SHANKHACHOODA RUSHED FORWARD AND ANSWERED HIS QUESTION

GARUDA, HE IS JIMUTA VAHANA, A VIDYADHARA PRINCE. I AM THE NAGA SENT UP FROM PATALA!



WHAT! THE VIRTUOUS JIMUTAVAHANA! ALAS, WITH THIS ONE ACT I HAVE SUNK INTO A MIRE OF SIN

O SHANKHACHOODA, DON'T FRUSTRATE MY ONE DESIRE.



THAT VERY MOMENT GARUDA UNDERWENT A GREAT TRANSFORMATION.

TO SAVE ONE LIFE HE HAS SACRIFICED HIS! AND WRETCH THAT I AM, I HAVE ALMOST DEVoured HIM.



U MUTAVAHANA!

SHANKHACHOODA!
QUICK! COVER MY
BODY. THEY WILL
NOT STAND THE
SHOCK OF SEEING
ME DEAD!

LIE STILL,
BROTHER. DO NOT
FEAR! WHAT LIFE
LEFT IN YOU.

OUR MOTHER
CRIES!

MY
HUSBAND!

FATHER! MOTHER!
I BOW TO YOU FOR
THE LAST TIME.
BLESS ME

MOTHER GOWRI,
HOW FALSE WERE
YOUR WORDS!

NO! YOU
CAN'T DIE! NOT
WHEN I AM
STILL ALIVE

I AM A SINNER.
I HAVE NO RIGHT
TO LIVE, I SHALL
ATONE FOR MY
SINS BY KILLING
MYSELF.

NO! DON'T. BY
REPENTANCE ALONE
CAN YOU ATONE
FOR YOUR SINS.
CEASE FOREVER
FROM DESTROY-
ING LIFE.

O DEVAS, WHY DO
YOU NOT SHOWER
AMRIT * OVER MY
SON AND REVIVE
HIM?

AMRIT! THE NECTAR OF
IMMORTALITY! WHY DIDN'T
I THINK OF IT! I WILL FLY
TO INDRA AND
ASK HIM FOR SOME.
I SHALL REVIVE NOT
ONLY JIMUTAVAHANA
BUT ALL THE NAGAS
I HAVE KILLED.

HIS MISSION

FATHER! MOTHER!
PERMIT ME TO
PASS THE TIME
WITH MY LORD.

GOWRI, BE
MY WITNESS.
HERE AND NOW
I FOLLOW MY
HUSBAND.



JUST THEN, GARUDA LET FALL A
SHOWER OF AMRIT AND THE
GODDESS MADE HER APPEARANCE.

WAIT, MY CHILD.
HOW CAN MY
WORDS PROVE
FALSE? JIMUTA-
VAHANA WILL
LIVE.



JIMUTAVAHANA,
RISE AND BECOME
THE EMPEROR OF
THE VIDYADHARAS

I BOW
TO YOU,
MOTHER
GOWRI.



THEN GARUDA SHOWERED AMRIT OVER THE DEAD NAGAS...



...AND THEY TOO WERE REVIVED.

KING VASUKI THANKED JIMUTAVAHANA.

YOU HAVE BROUGHT
HAPPINESS TO THE
NAGAS. YOU WILL
THEREFORE BE
KNOWN AS
NAGANANDA.



JIMUTAVAHANA
AND THE OTHERS
STARTED TO
CLIMB DOWN.

WHO CAN THAT
BE COMING THIS
WAY IN A
CHARIOT?

I THINK IT'S
MATANGA.



JIMUTAVAHANA,
PARDON ME
AND COME
BACK TO
YOUR KING-
DOM. THE
PEOPLE
WANT
YOU.

I WOULD RATHER
SERVE MY PARENTS
THAN GO BACK
TO RULE THE
KINGDOM.

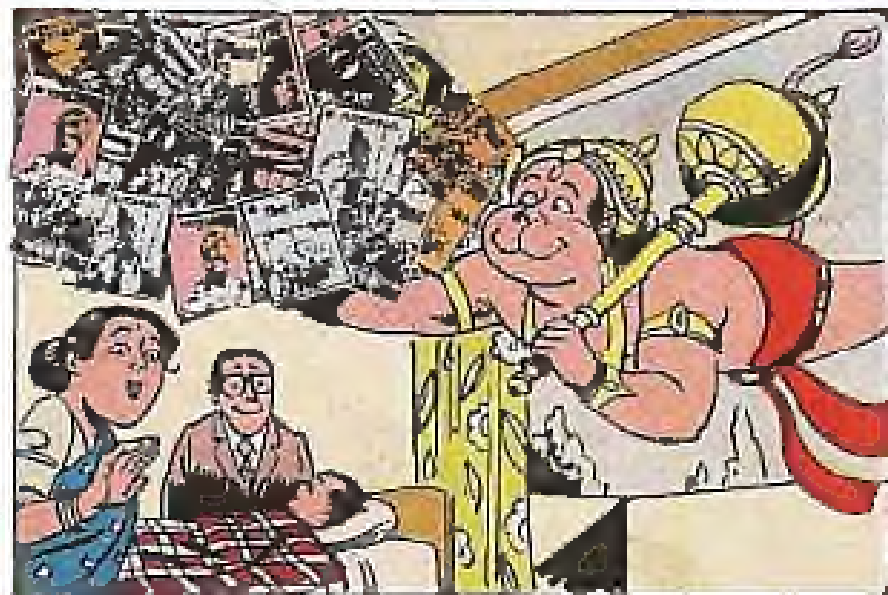
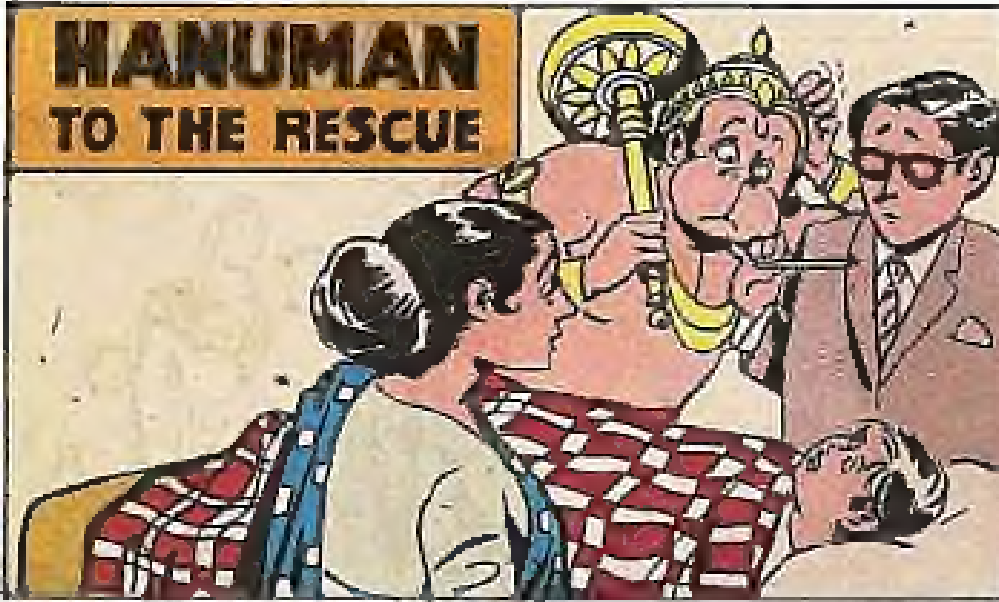


SON, THE WILL OF
THE PEOPLE MUST
NOT BE DISREGARDED.
SERVE THEM. TAKE
MALAYAVATI AND GO,
WITH OUR BLESSINGS.



JIMUTAVAHANA, THE APOSTLE OF LOVE AND NONVIOLENCE WHO NEVER WENT AGAINST THE WISHES OF HIS FATHER, RETURNED TO HIS KINGDOM WITH MALAYAVATI AND BECAME THE EMPEROR OF THE VIDYADHARAS.

HANUMAN TO THE RESCUE



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